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Press Conference for the presentation of the Message for the 54th World Peace Day

At 11.30 this morning a press conference was streamed live from the “John Paul II” Hall of the Holy See Press Office, to present the Message for the 54th World Peace Day, to be held on 1 January 2021.

The speakers were: His Eminence Cardinal Peter Kodwo Appiah Turkson, prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development; Msgr. Bruno-Marie Duffé, secretary of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development; Dr. Christine Jeangey, official of the same Dicastery; and Dr. Anne-Julie Kerheul, of the Second Section of the Secretariat of State.

The following are their interventions:

Intervention by His Eminence Cardinal Peter Kodwo Appiah Turkson

Intervention by Msgr. Bruno-Marie Duffé

Intervention by Dr. Christine Jeangey

Intervention by Dr. Anne-Julie Kerheul

Intervention by His Eminence Cardinal Peter Kodwo Appiah Turkson

1) "These and other events, which have marked the path of humanity in the past year, teach us the importance of caring for one another and for creation, in order to build a society based on relationships of brotherhood. That is why I have chosen as the theme for this message: The culture of care as a path to peace. These events are the great health crisis of Covid-19, which has become a multi-sectoral and global phenomenon, and the climate,

food, economic and migratory crises, death and forms of nationalism, racism, xenophobia and even wars and conflicts. These events and experiences are the immediate reason for the choice of the theme the culture of care as a path to peace. However, the theme also aims to "eradicate the culture of indifference, discard and confrontation that is often prevalent today". The promotion of care is precisely the integral promotion of the person, which is the mission of our Dicastery.

God the Model of Care:

2) It was Pope Benedict XVI who said that: Love, as light, was the first act created by God. He means that if creation expresses the manifestation of God outside himself, the motivation for this manifestation/action is found in his love. God's love bestowed upon us creates not only our being (our life), but also takes care of it. In his love God generates/creates us; he gives us life and protects it, he takes care of it.

Thus the presentation of the culture of care starts from the first book of the Bible which tells of the creation of life, its first threats and God's interventions to protect it, and ensure its continuation: a reinforced sense of the precept of Shabbat and Jubilee (Lev.25:4 Dt.15:5). Thus divine care ensures a person's dignity, and the realization of the right-gift of being/existing. In the same story, the human person, created in the image of God and in his likeness, is called, on his part, to take care of his fellow human beings (Cain and Abel) and the earth (garden to be cultivated and cared for). Divine care becomes an exemplar, a model of care for the human person and the earth, especially in the sense that divine care preserves the harmony of creation,

- because peace and violence cannot dwell in the same dwelling place.
- The pinnacle of the biblical understanding of justice is manifested in the way a community treats the weakest in its midst.

Care in the Ministry of Jesus and the nascent Church:

In his gestures and miracles (works), Jesus defines Care as:

- Turning one's gaze towards the other, reaching out to those in need: people (poor, needy, sick, imprisoned), but also nature, the environment.
- Situations of fragility to which it corresponds to stop and bow down to help (not in a passing form, but a return to being the protagonist of his situation Gal.6:2 "bear one another's burdens")
- Care as the different diakonias with which the Church took care of the members (paroikoi), living and witnessing to the charity of Christ.
- These diakonias become the different works of mercy (spiritual and corporal).
- See the historian Karl Bihlmeyer: "The spirit of Christian charity and self-denial that had so impressed the pagan world had certainly not disappeared. The demands of the time demanded new commitments in the service of Christian charity. The historical chronicles record countless examples of practical works of mercy. The Church was a social power in the declining culture of the time. The bishops had to take over from a corrupt and decrepit administration: to take over the duties of those responsible for public assistance; to provide food, clothing and shelter for the suffering and destitute. Helping the poor, slaves, prisoners and travellers became their concern. A portion of the Church's income was set aside for assistance to the poor. In large cities like Constantinople and Antioch, the Church's work with the poor was largely highly organised. From these concerted efforts emerged numerous orphanages, children's homes, passenger shelters, etc., unknown before the Christian era institutions for the relief of all human needs: hospitals, housing for the poor."

The Culture of Care and the Principles of the Social Doctrine of the Church:

- At a time of culture of discard, inequality: to care is to know how to value, that is: to recognise the individual as a PERSON, with dignity to care for, with access to the common good, because the goods of creation are meant for all;
- Therefore care as the promotion of the dignity and rights of the PERSON
- Care as always caring for the common good
- Care is achieved through solidarity (multilateralism), action in common.
- Care cannot neglect "care of creation/land/environment".
- So the culture of care allows humanity to stand up and walk towards a more just and peaceful society. Care means caring for systems/structures that give value.

Culture of care is therefore the compass for a common course in the process of globalisation: principles for the humanisation of social, political and economic systems and institutions

- C of Care as an expression of relationships between nations, characterised by justice, respect and brotherhood.
- Governments towards peoples, politicians towards civilians: care as the soul of all relationships.
- Opposite values: indifference, disinterestedness, watching from the balcony

3) Educating for Care:

- Etymological sense of culture... Indo-Germanic kuel (strive; sacrifice for an objective)
- Education for the culture of care originates in the family, as the privileged agent. After that comes the world of school, university, etc. social and digital communication (to convey a system of values that are lowered in dignity and promote human and fundamental rights).
- Religions and transmitters of values (dignity, respect, solidarity)

4) There is no peace without care:

- Care as a process of reconciliation, mutual acceptance, mutual respect fosters peace.
- The culture of care is the motivation and inspiration to restore justice.

Intervention by Msgr. Bruno-Marie Duffé

The terrible experience of the Covid-19 pandemic has led us to discover - or rediscover - the fragility of our physical and psychological organisms: our bodies and our health. But also the fragility of our institutions and policies that have supported 'technocratic' development - as the Encyclical *Laudato si'* puts it - without thinking

about the protection and care of biodiversity and people. Bodies and lives have been instrumentalized for the sole service of production and profit.

Although the pandemic has affected all social categories, we know that the poorest have experienced - and are experiencing - greater suffering. Indeed, the economic and social consequences of the pandemic have had a catastrophic impact on the most vulnerable: the homeless, the unemployed, migrants, workers in the informal economy, the elderly.

In this context, which calls for a fundamental conversion of social policies, the economy and international relations, what does 'culture of care' mean? Culture is a way of being and building a way of thinking about 'being together'. The "culture of care" therefore requires a certain vision of people and living conditions. "Caring" does not only mean providing assistance, although assistance and medication are indispensable. "Caring" means getting close to others, their bodies and their lives, and listening to their suffering, as one learns to listen to a beating heart. Dignity begins with looking and listening. Thus, the 'culture of care' is inseparable from the 'culture of encounter' that is central to the moral and pastoral teaching of Pope Francis.

What we have learned from the 'ethics of care', a reflection that has not always been fully appreciated in the recent past, is that encountering and listening in care places us in a relationship of mutual hospitality and reciprocity. We care for a person who teaches us to care for him or her. We listen to a suffering that challenges us in our capacity to love. A sick person can never be reduced to a number, a file or a diagnosis. And it is together that we walk the path of trust and healing. Because whatever the outcome of the illness, trust and dialogue heal us from indifference and put us on the road to rebirth ('co-birth') and a love that makes us grow. Personally, I learned this during ten years of accompanying people with cancer. And I can say that these people have accompanied me in my faith.

Chapter 7 of the Encyclical "Fratelli tutti" (n. 225 ff.) calls for 'paths of peace' to help heal the wounds and suffering caused by conflict and the consequences of injustice. This reflection of the Holy Father insists on peace processes as a cure for humanity, within each person and between people. As we know, these processes are long and difficult. They clash with the logic of interests, powers and recognition. The Holy Father speaks, in this regard, of the necessary architecture of peace and the daily and painstaking work of rebuilding ties.

The essential condition for these paths of peace to lead to the healing of our wounded humanity is truth.

"Those who were fierce enemies have to speak from the stark and clear truth. They have to learn how to cultivate a penitential memory, one that can accept the past in order not to cloud the future with their own regrets, problems and plans. Only by basing themselves on the historical truth of events will they be able to make a broad and persevering effort to understand one another and to strive for a new synthesis for the good of all" (FT 226).

The 'culture of care' approaches and listens to the wounds and desires of men, women, children and the elderly. As Christ himself taught us in making us close to suffering and calling us to live the truth.

The word and practice of "Christ the Caregiver", "Prince of Peace", calls caretakers and all those who work for respect and reconciliation, to constantly renew themselves in an attitude of truth. It is on this condition that the disease of violence and injustice can be overcome and healed, with God's grace.

Intervention by Dr. Christine Jeangey

Good morning to you all,

The Holy Father's Message is set in a particularly difficult social and international context. The health crisis

caused by the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 has highlighted and, in some cases, exacerbated the many existing difficulties in ensuring full respect for human rights, both in advanced and developing countries. It has reminded us of the unity and indivisibility of all human rights, as well as their profound interconnectedness and interdependence, to the extent that - for example - the need to respect the right to life and health has had consequences, sometimes painful, for the exercise of many other human rights, such as the right to work and the right to freedom of religion.

There remain long-standing contradictions within and between nations, which mean that one part of humanity lives in affluence while another part sees its dignity disregarded, despised or trampled upon and its fundamental rights ignored or violated[1]. Poverty and unemployment are rampant and social inequalities are exacerbated, while forms of exaggerated nationalism are gaining momentum, fuelling feelings and acts of intolerance, xenophobia and racism towards those considered different, such as migrants or ethnic and religious minorities.

There continue to be painful reports of people being subjected to enforced disappearances and extrajudicial executions, and prison conditions are deteriorating in many countries.

At the international level, it is sad to note that disputes between States all too often continue to be settled through the use of force, not only at the political and economic level, but also at the military level, with harmful consequences for the civilian populations who pay the painful cost, while 'unscrupulous merchants of death get rich at the price of the blood of their brothers and sisters'[2]. In fact, heinous armed conflicts continue in various regions of the world, while new ones arise, fuelled by dark interests, with their procession of violations of human dignity.

Faced with these painful realities and in contrast to the prevailing culture of indifference and discard, Pope Francis proposes the 'culture of care' as the way to peace.

He reaffirms the importance of international relations based on brotherhood, mutual respect, solidarity and the observance of international law, and reiterates the centrality of the protection and promotion of fundamental human rights[3]. In the face of the crisis in international human rights law, the culture of care implies a commitment to remedy numerous shortcomings and, with regard to multilateral debates and negotiations, to set aside partial visions and controversial interpretations and to overcome excessive politicisation in favour of a solidarity-based approach to fundamental rights for the common good of all humanity.

The culture of care also invites us to move beyond an economic model based exclusively on profit, and "which does not hesitate to exploit, discard and even kill human beings"[4], in favour of an economy that respects human dignity and the dignity of the individual, particularly economic, social and cultural rights, which should be adequately guaranteed. These include the right of access to health, which is as much a corollary of the right to life as the right to food and drinkable water; the right to work, decent working conditions and social security; the right to adequate housing; and the right to quality education, based on the recognition and appreciation of the dignity of each human person and the rights that flow from it, which is one of the pillars of democratic societies. "How much resources are wasted on weapons"[5], says Pope Francis, resources that could instead be used to better guarantee these fundamental rights!

The right to peace, a fundamental human right and a precondition for the full exercise of all human rights, deserves to be recognised and promoted. It is worth stressing here that the concept of peace is not limited to the mere absence of fighting, hostilities or conflicts, but refers above all to a context in which all human rights are assured and flourish - among which I would like to mention, in addition to those already mentioned and without prejudice to others, the right to life and the right to freedom of conscience and religion - as well as the rights of peoples, including the right to self-determination and the right to sovereignty over their natural resources, to be exercised with respect for the requirements of solidarity and international cooperation.

The culture of care also requires that disputes between states be resolved without recourse to force or coercion, whether political, economic or military in nature. In this context, it is worth remembering that recourse to unilateral coercive measures, whose conformity with international law is, moreover, contested in many quarters,

not infrequently has dramatic consequences for the populations of the countries affected, especially the most fragile groups, and generally leads to multiple violations of the fundamental rights of innocent citizens.

Another aspect of international law that the Holy Father mentions in his Message is international humanitarian law. As is well known, the Holy See is a party to the main international agreements on the subject and multiplies its appeals not only to ensure that this precious branch of international law is respected, but also that the rules it contains find, where necessary, an adequate development, in order to be able to better respond to the challenges posed by contemporary armed conflicts, especially those involving non-state armed actors[6].

Among the priorities of the Holy See, I would like to recall the protection of those detained for reasons connected with armed conflicts and that of humanitarian workers, also with regard to civilian religious personnel and places of worship, which are all too often the object of targeted attacks, even during religious celebrations, with numerous victims among the faithful and ministers[7]. In addition to these issues, there is an urgent need to put an end to the scourge of the involvement of children in armed conflicts and the use of rape as a weapon of war, which mainly affects women, who should instead be promoted as agents of reconciliation and peace.

At the end of this rapid examination of some of the implications of the culture of care, I think it is useful to recall one last aspect of the Message that I find particularly significant. This is the fact that Pope Francis is addressing not only Heads of State and Government but also the heads of international organisations, spiritual leaders and the faithful of the various religions, as well as all men and women of good will. This means that each person is called to make his or her own contribution, in the variety of roles and responsibilities entrusted to him or her, so that the dignity of every human person may be respected and valued in every circumstance.

I would therefore like to conclude this speech by expressing the hope that the culture of care will be welcomed into the hearts of all these people and translated into concrete actions in favour of those whose dignity is wounded.

Thank you for your attention.

[1] POPE FRANCIS, Message to participants at the International Conference "Human Rights in the Contemporary World: achievements, omissions, denials", Rome, 10-11 December 2018.

[2] Idem.

[3] POPE FRANCIS, The culture of care as a way to peace, Message for the celebration of the 54th World Day of Peace, 1 January 2021, n. 7

[4] POPE FRANCIS, Message to participants at the International Conference "Human Rights in the Contemporary World: achievements, omissions, denials", cit.

[5] POPE FRANCIS, World Day of Peace 2021, n.7, cit.

[6] POPE FRANCIS, Address to participants at the Fifth International Course for the Training of Catholic Military Chaplains in International Humanitarian Law, 31 October 2019.

[7] POPE FRANCIS, Address to participants at the Conference on International Humanitarian Law, 28 October 2017.

Intervention by Dr. Anne-Julie Kerheul

Eminence, Excellencies, Monsignor, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The message of Pope Francis for the World Day of Peace this year invites us to focus on a fundamental aspect of the promotion of peace, an aspect linked to the vocation of every person to live and witness to "caring", to this openness to the other, the corollary of our interdependence, if not to the sense of responsibility that links us to one another, to our common home and to future generations.

As we read through the message addressed to us, it is beautiful to note how much this culture of caring has been illustrated over the centuries, in particular through the different organisational systems of the first communities. Most of them included free spaces dedicated to the care of the weakest or most marginalised. This is an illustration of caring as an essential character of any human civilisation.

The culture of care, far from being alien to the notion of justice, contributes to it, insofar as it requires putting the human person and the protection of his or her rights, which find their source and their foundation in his or her inalienable dignity, at the centre. Caring implies above all recognising that everyone should be able to benefit from these universal rights, particularly social rights, which derive from human dignity and cannot be denied to anyone. Think of the right to food, access to medical care or education (etc.).

This "grammar" of caring has been expressed, among other things, in the recognition and formulation of human rights, which were enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. While highlighting the rights of the human person, this Declaration does not omit to also underline his or her belonging to the human family. The idea of justice, inherent in the guarantee of human rights, is thus combined with the need to take into account the relational and social nature of the human person. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights refers to this in Article 1, evoking "the spirit of fraternity". Consequently, it is less appropriate to interpret human rights in an individualistic and subjective way, than to consider them by considering the person as a being in a relationship, a protagonist of living together, and whose actions may have an impact on the life and exercise of the rights of others.

By insisting on the culture of care, Pope Francis confronts us with what constitutes an imperative for any human society committed to the path of peace. In contrast to the culture of waste, the culture of care therefore requires us to remedy the denial of the most essential rights to many of our deprived and marginalised contemporaries.

In this regard, it would be wrong to consider the culture of care as a culture of dependency. Rather, the aim is to foster an inclusive environment in which every person, man or woman, can fully develop and promote the culture of care as a path to peace.
